Chapter 4
Musicianship, Musical Identity, and Meaning as Embodied Practice

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The baton slices its linear path
through space and within
a sheer infinity
of passing seconds
the ideal *of what should be*
the memory *of what has been and*
the reality *of* status quo
reverberate in prismic contrast.

Reality edges ever nearer to ideal
yet never quite meets it
in a perennially tragic flirtation.

Merely a single chord strikes
countless possibilities for resolution
unbalanced or unblended
from the discordant to the uncanny
solutions echo their contrasts and call for direction.

Music making and the imparting of musical understandings and techniques entail deeply personal experiences that largely remain in the realm of the ineffable, characterized by seemingly irreconcilable dichotomies: introspective yet communal, traditional yet innovative, and disciplined yet liberating. The preceding verse is derived from phenomenological writings produced during my experience of conducting the All-State Band of Connecticut Independent Schools in 2008. It was my attempt to express poetically the sense of heightened awareness, immediacy, and intensity of the awesome challenge of effectively leading a large ensemble toward attainment of a higher level of musical performance. Increasingly, each musical experience such as this one has bolstered my belief that music education should focus on the objective of fostering a critical, flexible, and comprehensive musicianship among students, and that research must seek to more effectively address the phenomena of

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subjectivity and meaning in musical experience. However, in the United States and in other nations, an array of political factors currently stands in the way of those who would teach music for the purpose of musically empowering their students, while various disciplinary ideologies hinder the advancement of innovative approaches to research and teaching practice.

Wind bands, choirs, and orchestras have long served as a staple of school music education in the United States, but this large ensemble model has for good reason met criticism in recent years as progressive music educators contemplate ways that music education might be re-envisioned in order to become more effective and meaningful in students' musical lives in, outside of, and after graduation from school. Questions have been raised regarding the extent to which large performance ensembles might or should continue to hold a prominent position in the future of school music education. Specifically, what are their unique advantages, and what of importance is missing from the typical large ensemble experience that might be imparted through the use of new approaches or even entirely different forms of music teaching?

Through reflecting on Ideal *#2*, this chapter will offer some suggestions for reconceptualizing the connections between music in schools and communities. The aesthetic traditions referred to in Ideal #2, "with their claims that musical meaning and value transcend time, place, context and human purpose and usefulness" (pp. xxxi–xxxvii, this volume) fail to acknowledge the intimate connection between music and its social and cultural contexts and conditions and, therefore, do not fully account for music and music making as situated in local communities (that is, outside of schools) and communities of musical practice (that is, which are distinguished by the musicianship and other skills and cognitions that characterize particular musics). Recommendations regarding issues are proposed for careful consideration in the development of future music education policy and pedagogy.

Musicianship, Schooling, and Cultural Context

Over 30 years ago, in an article in the *Music Educators Journal* entitled "Music Education in a Changing Society," then MENC president Charles Benner (1975) expressed his concern that "there is still a wide gap between existing goals and practice" within American music education (p. 35). From reading the discourse of music and music education academics and administrators, one may get the impression that this predicament is a perennial problem; yet perhaps the situation has never been as dire as some have imagined. Surely the opposite would be far worse: not having such ambitious and lofty dreams for our music students and finding that we have no sense of how to improve the field. Particularly in the last two decades, the field of music education has been enriched by the rapid growth of philosophical inquiry into a vibrant subfield of music education scholarship. Philosophers thrive on problems, deriving fulfillment from spinning arguments that sometimes seem destined to remain only in the realm of theory, perhaps never to be fully realized. On the other hand, those who focus their efforts on effecting actual changes in practice are

sometimes viewed as doing work that is less sophisticated and scholarly in nature, even when it clearly leads to improvements. Meanwhile, the field of school music education continues to evolve, sometimes aligned with, and at other times quite distant from theoretical or scholarly thinking.

Action Ideal #2 (pp. xxxi–xxxvii, this volume) seeks to inspire positive change by emphasizing the highly relevant themes of musicianship and cultural context, both of which are areas of great importance.

This, as with the other action ideals, raises many provocative points that invite the interpretations that are the focus of this book. The concepts of "balance" and "connection" are useful starting points for this discussion. The writers of Ideal #2 have suggested that a balance needs to be maintained in music instruction between the objectives of instilling "musicianship and musicality" and an understanding of the "human needs and contexts" to which musical values are inextricably connected. They also assert that the "situatedness of musical practices" that is ignored or rejected by traditional aesthetic theories needs to be properly acknowledged and that "hypothesized and ephemeral aesthetic qualities" should be replaced as a foundation for music education by an emphasis on "tangible qualities of musicianship" that, in contrast, provide a "basis for teaching, learning, and evaluating music-making." The position advocated in this statement is partly based on a recognition that the kinds of musical offerings traditionally provided in American schools have often failed to represent the cultural diversity of surrounding communities on which they have also often had little impact. "School music," following the premises of *aestheticism*, is thus often viewed by music educators as transcending the "time, place, context, and human purpose and usefulness" mentioned in Ideal #2 and, instead, is "for itself" and fails to "connect" with, or have a consequential impact on the musics outside the schoolhouse doors.

However, school music does not lack precedents of going beyond aestheticism and, thus, of addressing musical pluralism. Multicultural education and multicultural music education, in particular, are movements that have addressed this challenge, especially since the late 1980s (Banks 2008, Campbell 2004, Campbell et al. 2005). More recently, popular music pedagogy also has built on the trajectory pioneered by multicultural music education and jazz pedagogy (Green 2008, Hebert in press). Nowadays, music from diverse cultures is much more widely encountered in general music programs at the elementary school level, and there are indications that the music curriculum is changing considerably in response to societal shifts in recent years (Barrett 2007, Campbell 2007). Perhaps the greatest challenge remaining for multicultural music education is within the domain of secondary instrumental music education programs, which for many communities continues to consist exclusively of traditional school bands performing standard Euro-American educational repertoire, including Westernized arrangements of traditional musics. The concepts of balance and connection will be particularly useful when we consider the relationship—or lack of one—between musical practices in schools, the pluralistic musical practices in local communities, and the distinctive communities of practice that produce those musics. Action Ideal #2 provides important "food for thought" regarding all these considerations and relationships.

Fundamentalism and Its Discontents

It is useful to begin by identifying the problem that serves as a rationale for the argument that will follow: What happens when the objective of fostering a relevant, flexible, and creative musicianship on the part of students does *not* always serve as the central aim of music education, and when musical identities and meanings are imposed, instead, from above? One answer may arguably be found through examination of various musical challenges afflicting American society today, some of which are implied by the aforementioned action ideal. On this note, it seems reasonable to suggest that American music education has until recent years suffered from a kind of "fundamentalism." Fundamentalism has been defined as "any belief or policy that promotes a return to basic principles and founding doctrines; most commonly associated with religious movements in Christianity and Islam" (Rohmann 2002, 152). In other words, it is a belief or policy that promotes reliance on assumed basic principles and uncritically accepted doctrines as "the" best or only premise for action. Fundamentalism in religion typically insists that there is a single correct way of interpreting how the words of prophets from a strikingly different culture more than 2000 years in the past should be understood and applied to particular situations in one's own life: All other possibilities are ignored or rejected.

A fundamentalist attitude in music may similarly assert, equally uncritically, that the music of European royal courts and high society from more than a century in the past is "naturally" more significant and worthy of study than other forms of music: All other musics are less profound and less civilized. Extending this interpretation, one might acknowledge that traditional aesthetics and the resulting "music is for itself" aestheticism referred to in Ideal #2 have functioned as a kind of theology for what might be called "musical fundamentalists," guiding the rationalization of their passionate views. Even in the twenty-first century, such "canonic" positions are advocated by a handful of scholars who occupy powerful positions in their fields. Recent books by philosopher Roger Scruton (1999, 2000) and music educator Robert Walker (2007) may be interpreted as a last desperate gasp of this form of musical fundamentalism or neoconservativism—the kind that tells the masses what is "good for them" on the grounds that they lack adequate bases for judgments of their own—thus exiting in a manner reminiscent of T. S. Elliot's verse, "not with a bang but a whimper."

Yet, the world has rapidly changed. The imperfect reality of European art music, the community of practice that sustains it, and its dubious claims of universal relevance, and "for its own sake" aestheticism are increasingly critiqued in both scholarly and popular culture representations (Brown and Volgsten 2006, Tindall 2005). It is difficult to imagine music scholars of a younger generation advocating fundamentalist positions so contrary to the pluralistic world we have all experienced, in which much of the profound artistry associated with many creative performers of popular music (and non-Western traditions) is undeniably self-evident. As Campbell et al. (2005) have observed, in many parts of the world music teachers now face

"a generation of students for whom cultural diversity in music is almost as common as cultural diversity in food for the previous generation" (p. v). Still, music education has not accommodated this diversity as much as it could or should if it is to claim to be relevant to the pluralistic world of music and musical options that exist outside the schoolhouse doors.

Despite the obvious risks associated with any predictions of the future, I am convinced future historians will look back on the state of early twenty-first century American music education policy with a sense of bewildered curiosity. They will note that during the politically and socially divisive era of the George W. Bush presidency, many leaders of our field supported an extraordinarily misguided agenda in diametric opposition to the scholarly discourse of music education, placing greater emphasis on patriotism (for example, lists of patriotic songs to be included in curriculum) than on creative musicianship; on "advocacy" for programs that are outdated and unresponsive to the needs of society rather than on reflection and renewal (in terms of both improved relevance and effectiveness); and on dogmatic adherence to a prescriptive national standards-based curriculum rather than flexible programs rooted in student-centered learning (Brown and Volgsten 2006, Gee 2002, Hebert 2006, Heller 2005, Regelski 2002).

Fortunately, historians may at the same time look upon early twenty-first century American music education *practice* with entirely different impressions. While the positions of music education organizations may currently be more misguided than at other points in history, examples can be cited of important developments in the areas of both research and practice (for example, McPherson 2006, McCarthy 2002). While some critics insist music is under siege in American schools, there are programs that exemplify important success stories, as visionary school teachers eschew fundamentalist dogma to pioneer intuitive approaches. Thus, in the hands of innovative thinkers and teachers, there are hopeful indications that school music education is gradually improving on many fronts in the United States, in spite of its leadership. Such is the story of how marimba ensembles and both instrumental and vocal jazz ensembles have attained such high levels of achievement in the Pacific Northwest, as mariachi ensembles have also done in the Southwest, while the creative use of music technologies is embraced in the Great Lakes states, and Gospel choirs and innovative popular music programs forge notable new paths in various urban centers nationwide.

Still, it is important to note that in the United Kingdom, Scandinavia and Australasia, school music education programs have for decades emphasized, particularly innovative approaches to creative musicianship, including song writing and composition, the widespread use of new technologies, and performance of popular music on characteristic instruments in schools. The United States has lagged in some of these areas, but has pioneered new approaches in other domains, such as improvisation (within school jazz ensembles) and multicultural music education. Whether these new approaches are ultimately accepted at the national level remains to be seen. These examples are hopeful indicators, however, of positive innovation and are certainly in tune with the *Action for Change* agenda at stake in this book.

Rethinking School Music Ensembles

One section of the Ideal #2 questions the "standards of musicianship and musicality in music education" that "can be guided by traditions associated with aesthetic theories while still emphasizing the situatedness of the musical practices." This brings us to consideration of the kinds of musicianship traditions actually promoted in most American school music programs. Many recent innovations in music education have been at least partly inspired by the conviction that traditional school ensembles provide inadequate educational opportunities to students. Particularly in North America, the phenomenon of school bands represents a notable example of institutionalized music with increasingly dubious connections to the reality of community music practices. Patrick Jones (2008) has recently observed that "Band music is no longer the popular music of the day, the utility of school bands in the community has been diminished, the educational climate is not conducive to their continuance as historically conceived" and even warned that "if we fail to transform it and ourselves, the school band, as we have known it will either limp along as a quaint anachronism or be eliminated altogether (14)."

It is important here to recognize that the typical American approach to music education is unique compared with the educational systems of most other nations, where bands, choirs, and orchestras are extracurricular activities and where general music education (sometimes called "classroom music") is offered not only at the elementary but also at the intermediate and secondary levels of schooling. There may be advantages to these other approaches. On the other hand, Pitts (2008) observes that in the United Kingdom, "the role of extra-curricular music [ensembles] appears to be particularly crucial in shaping attitudes to music that are carried into later life, and offers one of the strongest points of connection with the independent musical development that young people engage with out of school (14)." This finding appears to suggest that classroom music alone may be insufficient to inspire lifelong music participation, or at least that extracurricular performance ensemble offerings may be more appealing to certain students within such educational systems.

Let's return for a moment to the verse used at the opening of this chapter. While it seems clear from the first stanza that, as conductor (perhaps like many ensemble directors), I am earnestly seizing the intensity of each moment in the rehearsal described, it is entirely possible that the fourth-chair Third Clarinet player is not in the slightest experiencing that musical intensity, as she incessantly blows through the repetitive and uninteresting passages, failing to grasp how each fits into the fabric of the ensemble and the larger or holistic experience of the piece, and how (or whether) we are collectively progressing "ever nearer to ideal." Despite my careful choice of repertoire and eager efforts to provide inspiring conducting and effective instruction, such inherent limitations associated with the fundamental structure of this instructional vehicle demonstrate that large ensembles are simply not conducive to the learning of much of what really matters in music. Learning the notes for the next concert is not a proper "curriculum"; rather, the music should promote musical experiences that are the bases of personal musicianship and of future choices

that such musicianship makes possible. For example, the music I have chosen for this concert, although interesting and relatively unusual for the wind band idiom, is surely not what most students would consider to best fit their musical preferences. Given such scenarios, should we continue to confidently assure ourselves that the relevance of bands can be salvaged, or should school bands be reinvented or revitalized through creative agency on the part of visionary teachers?

My recent research has considered this question from various angles, proceeding with the recognition that much remains unknown to instrumental directors regarding various band music traditions and hybrid genres throughout the world (Hebert 2008a, b, c). My findings suggest that the reality of "community band" activity is actually remarkably diverse, but that the typical American school band does not even begin to represent the global musical diversity that can be encountered through even this one specific group of traditional instruments. Still, the question remains of whether (or to what degree) traditional European wind, percussion, and string instruments alone can adequately represent the diverse world of contemporary music, particularly considered in terms of student interests and musical identities. Elsewhere, I have attempted to demonstrate ways that even very young students may be empowered to become creative improvisers and songwriters in multicultural hybrid genres, such as jazz and rock music (Hebert in press). Meanwhile, in the United Kingdom, music teachers at the secondary level are now widely encouraged to step back and let students organize and operate their own music ensembles based on personal interests (Green 2008). We still have much to learn from both successes and shortcomings of such approaches.

While composition is notably absent from most American school music programs, the inclusion of such genres would provide further opportunities for creative music making of the kind more commonly encountered in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. Meanwhile, in the United States the field of choral music is already experiencing pioneering developments that greatly exceed that of instrumental music in terms of the new connections being forged with local communities and musics outside of the traditional canon. Consider the innovative work of Mary Goetze with the "International Vocal Ensemble" at Indiana University (Goetze 2008), or Horace Clarence Boyer's work with Gospel music at University of Massachusetts (Boyer 2008), or Jane Wilburn Sapp's outreach activities in Atlanta and elsewhere (Sapp 2008).

Musical Identity and Agency in Music Education

As Ideal #2 prompts us to reflect further on the relevance and "situatedness" of school music programs, the concepts of identity and agency are useful in framing the process by which the musical self is both externally and internally defined through its negotiation of the expectations and constraints of society or communities within the larger society. In the words of philosopher Mark Johnson (1994), "human beings are not fixed quasi-objects that have an independent prior identity and *then* go about making choices from which they are distanced. We are, rather,

beings in process whose identity emerges and is continually transformed in an ongoing process of reflection and action (148)." Identity is also comprised largely of the personal narratives that one constructs to make sense of both past experiences and present challenges.

Music plays an important role in identity construction, especially of adolescents. But while the theme of "musical identities" has long been of interest to ethnomusicologists, it has only recently become a major concern in music education (due, in part, to the rise of multicultural music education, as well as the pioneering efforts of music education scholars, such as Max Kaplan (1993) and Brian Roberts (1993)). Some critical questions associated with identity in music education include: (a) Who are our students and what is their music?; (b) Whose music are we teaching?; and (c) How can we bridge the gap between our students' present musical choices and experiences and the cultural distinctiveness, qualities, and other values of the musics we hope to help them understand, value, and thus choose to avail themselves of after they leave us?

Some answers are pointed to by Johnson (1994) who writes that the self "develops its identity by inhabiting characters embedded within socially shared roles and by creatively appropriating these roles, even to the point of co-authoring new ones (151)." Thus it is useful to recognize that musical activities are unusually rich in terms of the diverse kinds of musical identities they engender, opening many possibilities in this regard. The musics encountered in schools—often selected for students by their teachers—shape identity and thus influence the "musical selves" that students are always "becoming" through their present and future choices. This, in the spirit of Ideal #2, is perhaps the most direct aspect of music's situatedness and of its value beyond "for-itself" kinds of aestheticism. Music is for self and collections of selves—or communities of musical practice—as embodied experience.

The notion of "communities of practice" (see, for example, Wenger 1998) is thus a useful concept for considering the role school programs can play in the musical identity formation of students. Elsewhere, I also applied this concept from the cognitive and social sciences to the field of music education. At the risk of oversimplification, the notion of communities of practice suggests in essence that through engaging in social practices we learn and gain acceptance into social groups in which these practices are both valued and nurtured. Music, of course, involves just such communities of practice, whether they consist of those who value certain musics over other kinds or the various communities whose musicianship practices define a particular music or even bring it into being to begin with (for example, different communities of practice or taste within the world of rock music, or different drumming traditions). Then there are also communities of practice that put music to use, through personal and social agency, but also in the service of social and economic ends—everything from religious music to entertainment, dance music to advertising. This perspective is also consistent with "practice" theories of contemporary anthropology that highlight the role of power within culture (for example, Ortner 2006).

One advantage of the communities of practice concept in contemporary social theory is that it enables us to more clearly recognize the role of *subjectivity* in

experience, as we contemplate the larger implications of both our actions and our interpretations of them. In contrast to a typical understanding of subjectivity as consciousness of one's perceived states of mind, Ortner (2006) defines subjectivity anthropologically as "a specifically cultural and historical consciousness," and suggests that "to ignore it theoretically is to impoverish the sense of the human in the so-called human sciences" because such subjectivity is "a major dimension of human existence (110)." Ortner (2006) also sees subjectivity as "the basis of 'agency,' a necessary part of understanding why and how people (try to) act on the world even as they are acted upon (110)." Essentially, through their agency, individuals challenge, problematize, and thereby contribute to the collective modification of social structures—including communities of practice of all kinds, at all levels of society—from which their personal narratives and identities emerge. Subjectivity is, therefore, a central ingredient of creative agency in music.

What implications does such a theoretical perspective have for the development of critical and creative musicianship among our students? Despite widespread resistance to the idea within higher education, we know it is possible to be a highly competent performer, composer, and scholar in more than one musical tradition. This is evident from the lives of historical figures such as Bela Bartok, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Percy Grainger, and even medieval musician Hildegard von Bingen, as well as contemporary examples such as Gunther Schuller, Bobby McFerrin, Maria Schneider, Yo-Yo Ma, Wynton Marsalis, Libby Larsen, Zakir Hussain, and the list goes on. Such models can serve to inspire us to instill in our students comparably flexible and imaginative dispositions, open to the exploration of new identities via creative agency: an artistry of liberated originality without borders and beyond the reach of standardized evaluative structures. While such a musicianship might fail to attain the enthusiastic approval of contest adjudicators and conservatory fundamentalists, it would instead produce well-rounded and thoughtful individuals, critical thinkers who might contribute to society in richly diverse ways, and not only in music. For those rare individuals for whom music becomes even more than a lifelong avocation, they would have mastered the flexibility to adapt to or lead change in the ever-changing demands of the global music world. This creative musicianship and agency would enable students to see for themselves the "countless possibilities for resolution" mentioned in my opening verse and perhaps even suggest ones I had never imagined possible.

Embodiment and Meaning in Music Education

Further consideration of that "specifically cultural and historical consciousness" that Ortner associates with subjectivity, perhaps the most central aspect of music's "situatedness," is the role of the individual *body* in a particular music context. The aestheticism that follows from the traditional aesthetic theories critiqued in Ideal #2 has typically denied a role to the body. Instead, an intellectual, rationalist, or cognitive basis for aesthetic responding is advanced: the "chills" and other intense visceral responses that many people experience in connection with music are, from the

perspective of such theories, often wrongly called "aesthetic responses." Great care is taken, therefore, to distinguish "true" "aesthetic experiences" from mere sensory or hedonistic delight, which is seen as consisting of responding in purely emotional, not aesthetic, terms (see, for example, Walker 2007).

Johnson (1994) notes, "both our concepts and our reasoning about them are grounded in the nature of our bodily experience and are structured by various kinds of imaginative processes (1)." As Johnson demonstrated (more recently and comprehensively [2007]), bodily experience plays a fundamental role in even the most abstract and seemingly disengaged forms of cognition, including our reasoning associated with ethical and artistic judgments. In fact, our most fundamental analytical concepts, rooted in metaphors, are based upon specific forms of bodily experience.

Musical experience is rooted in just such embodied metaphors, for example, consider traditional dance forms (minuet, waltz, etc.) and even the "movements" of our symphonies and references to being "moved" by music depend on such embodied meanings. Reference to "a walking bass line" only "makes sense" according to such embodied metaphors, and even references to intonation—that pitch is somehow "high" or "low"—depend in part on spatial experiences metaphorically extended to describe sound's effect in relation to the body. Similarly, performing is intimately tied to the development of desirable habits comprising precise physical movements that correspond to an affectively attuned cognition that apprehends and guides the ongoing trajectory of movement.

Despite the positions of some traditional aesthetes, it should be clear, therefore, that musical meaning is deeply rooted in embodied experience. Musicianship is both subjective and culturally shared, and warrants being conceived in terms of embodied practice. It is not a simple accumulation of musical information and skills but the sharing of a lived practice—shared in a community of practitioners (of whatever kind of musicking is at stake) and available only within that community, since the practice in question is "defined" or "carried" collectively, not in the mind of any individual practitioner. Thus, even when we just listen to music and reflect upon it, the very nature of our reflection inevitably makes use of a host of schema derived from embodied experience. Contrary to the traditional intellectualized aestheticism that Ideal #2 seeks to overcome, the resulting embodied and subjective meaning is particularly salient due to the profundity of its role in all human meaning construction.

Music's strong connection to emotions, and the essential role that emotions play in the human experience (see, for example, Juslin and Sloboda 2001, Nussbaum 2003), are thus issues that seem to require further consideration in relation to proposed rationales and objectives for music education. What are the implications of this process in terms of the aforementioned themes of identity and cultural diversity? One important issue to consider here is the extent to which the "meanings" of musics from diverse cultures may be apprehended and fully understood by people from outside those cultures and to consider whether a perspective that accounts for embodied meaning can also entail the flexibility necessary to accommodate musical diversity and change.

The first step in such a consideration is to take into account the convergence of musical cultures in institutional contexts—*institutionalized* communities of practice that respond as much (or more) to the demands of the institution as to influences from outside the institution. To return to an earlier concern, the danger of what was called musical fundamentalism often arises where the pronouncements of an institution's leaders, authorities, gatekeepers (who control entrance and exit to the institution), and "mindguards" (who dogmatically defend the status quo against unacceptable practices, views, or values) take on lives of their own, often expressed as "standards." The relevance of this danger for the various institutions of music education (not only schools, universities, and conservatories but orchestras, opera companies, music disciplines, music criticism, and all attempts to impose dogma, "canons" or "high standards" from outside the practice of music itself) should be clear.

Elsewhere I have argued that "the merging of musical cultures is a highly complex, unpredictable, and politically-charged process," in part due to the tendencies of any musical culture to submit to fundamentalisms and institutionalization. But this should not be taken to mean that such change, such creative agency, is an unfathomable social phenomenon beyond analysis or reach (Hebert 2008a, 198). Rather, there is much to be learned from careful examination of how new musical traditions develop, which frequently results from the kind of musical hybridity (Hebert 2008b, c) that either resists fundamentalism and institutional practices or that frees itself from such static tendencies because, in the end, as a living, breathing, embodied art, musical dynamics and energies cannot be institutionalized into such "standards" or standardized practices. Studies of musical hybridity often highlight the significance of the fact that new musical traditions typically develop according to just such musical dynamics and energies that expand into an entirely new and distinct musical sensibility, whether the music of Meredith Monk, the Art Ensemble of Chicago, Tongan *fangufangu* noseflute, or the Thai Elephant Orchestra. Sound makers are guided by judgments about the values and effects of sound that arise as embodied practices within a specific sociocultural context.

The embodied basis of meaning was first suggested in the *aisthesis* (also spelled *aesthesis*), of Ancient Greece—a term that referred to knowledge directly gained through sensory experience; that is, through fully embodied experience. By the mid-eighteenth century, the idea of *aisthesis* had evolved into what became "aesthetics," various philosophical attempts to validate sensory experiences of art and music in rational and therefore universal terms. This eventually led to the diverse aesthetic theories that arose in quite large numbers in the ensuing centuries—in effect there were, and still are, as many different theories as there are theorists—by which *aisthesis* became "rationalized" and presumed to serve as a basis for judgments of the beautiful (or, for romanticism, of the "sublime") in art and music.

Leading postmodernist philosophers who have continued to write of "aesthetics," for example, Foucault's discussion of the "aesthetics of self," Baudrillard's "aestheticization of the whole world" (Sepp 2004, Baudrillard 1993), have tended to do so by recourse to concepts that take a postmodern approach to *aisthesis*. Moreover, it is worth noting that in recent scholarship the very notion of "music" was also increasingly reconsidered in terms of its ontological foundations. For example,

Alperson (1991), a leading aesthetician, critiqued the validity of aesthetic theory as an adequate basis for music education and was the first to propose the need for a "praxial" theory to account for all music and, thus for the word "music" in music education—a project that, among other effects, became central to The May-Day Group's agenda of *Action for Change* in 1997 (pp. xxxi–xxxvii, this volume), with Ideal #2 taking its lead directly from Alperson.

Many scholars associated with the field of "aesthetics" continue to write about music—often, these days, in terms that are, like Alperson's seminal paper, at odds with the kind of aestheticism objected to in Ideal #2—and it would be foolhardy to ignore such theorizing. But, just as traditional aesthetic theories of music have distanced music from the social and cultural contexts of music, so too has school music been distanced from those same contexts by its reliance on aesthetic theories (see, for example, McCarthy this volume). And the "ephemeral" aspects of such theories cannot serve as an adequate basis for planning and evaluating music learning; instead a focus on practice—communities of practice, musicianship practices, and music as personal and social agency (etc.)—provides tangible bases, while still relying on aesthesis—and particularly *aisthesis* in regard to the qualities and effects of sound (see Shepherd this volume)—as the source of music's appeal and attraction.

As regards the earlier discussion of hybridity and the creation and evolution of different musics, we may recognize that musicians forging new paths in hybrid genres often are responsive to social, cultural, and musical contexts—sometimes "reflecting" such contexts (for example, rap and reggae), but sometimes steadfastly striking off in new directions (for example, Arnold Schoenberg's dodecaphonic system, Gunther Schuller's "Third Stream" fusion of jazz and classical music, all "crossovers" between genres, and virtually every "new" sound or sensibility in music from Elvis or the Beatles to punk and heavy metal). Such innovators often creatively negotiate between competing systems (for example, Schuller), while others "do their own thing" either without regard to existing musics or simply on the basis of "what sounds good" to them. In all cases, contrary to traditional aesthetic theory and aestheticist tendencies toward "music for its own sake," such innovation and hybridity are inevitably rooted in the kinds of "social and cultural contexts" and "situatedness" mentioned in Ideal #2.

"Aesthetics"—understood as philosophizing or theorizing *about* music or other arts—comes into play when musicians actively debate (with others or themselves) which sounds best fit into the music they are creating. Otherwise, "aesthetics," as a subdiscipline within philosophy, is propounded by aestheticians, critics, and other scholars (for example, the "new aestheticism" in literary criticism). In any event, "aesthetics" as a scholarly field is *itself* always culturally situated, for example, situated within certain philosophical traditions or schools of philosophy, thus not sharing any "core" or consistent meaning for the word "aesthetic." However, as Wayne Bowman (2000) has indicated, "Foreign musical practices are seldom completely closed books to us, and we do often succeed in catching glimpses of musical 'sense' even in practices with which we are not at all conversant (55)."

Music's universal appeal may thus be taken as a sign of the possibility that aesthesis in connection with sound and its social use as music is alive and well everywhere

in the world. The illuminating work of Stephen Davies (2003), although based primarily on consideration of European art music, also relies on his experiences with jazz and Balinese traditions. Thus, the notion of "situatedness" and the importance of social and cultural context to music and music education increasingly inform contemporary scholarship about music in the fields of philosophy, musicology, and social sciences (for example, Davies 2003, Gracyk 2007, Johnson 2007, Martin 2006).

Understanding music in terms of the social and cultural contexts in which it arises and is used certainly merits consideration within music education, but such understandings are only one component of a comprehensive music education, for example, the other action ideals in the *Action for Change* agenda address other important components. The issue here, in my view, is not whether "aesthetics" should be discarded from music education, but rather, how artistic understandings are best taught: whether they are to be conveyed as a kind of fundamentalist ideology (much like the way that patriotism is often imparted in schools) or as conceptual tools that students may use to articulate their preferences and empathetic understandings of the choices made by creative musicians within diverse traditions. That is why the "traditions associated with aesthetic theories" discussed in Ideal #2 are so important to acknowledge and build upon, but in the tangible terms of living musical practices. Thus, we can and should avoid throwing out the baby—the musicianship practices—with the bathwater of aestheticist fundamentalism.

Earlier, questions were raised about the central role of large ensembles in music education and the educational problems associated with them. However, the kinds of musicianship, values, and judgments that I have argued should be at the core of a comprehensive music education are difficult, perhaps impossible, to adequately address in traditional large ensembles. Such ensembles clearly offer few opportunities for individual judgments and musical independence (viz., from the director, who typically makes all musical decisions). One way of applying these ideas of comprehensive musicianship that supports the most fruitful engagement with a variety of musics is through the teaching of composition, where provocative questions from teachers can inspire the exploration of new possibilities and develop a comprehensive musicianship through the students' own creative agency (see, for example, Hickey 2003, Wilkins 2006). New technologies are rapidly transforming all aspects of how we create and consume music, and much more can be done to empower music teachers with the ability to use such technologies to their fullest capability, enabling musical opportunities to reach greater numbers of students (see, for example, Finney and Burnard 2007, Hebert 2008d, Williams and Webster 2006). Ironically, online and virtual environments may even enable the development of a "critical virtual embodiment" that empowers and transcends the passive condition of "schizophonia"—a divorcing of musical sounds from their authentic contexts—decried by some scholars (Keil and Feld 1994). I argue that music teachers should do more to embrace innovation that promotes such comprehensive and personally useful musicianship and that music teacher educators need to set more of an example in this area for them to follow.

Leading by Example in Music Education

The scholarship of music teacher education seems to struggle for legitimacy among more powerful disciplinary peers within the academic areas of music. Regrettably, music educators often suffer from a kind of *methodocentrism* that prevents them from recognizing the value of research methods that differ from their own personal preferences. In this regard, the focus of such scholarship can be critiqued as too often uninformed by, and lacking the insights provided by, other perspectives and contexts. In a manner of speaking, it can be seen as distanced from actual music teaching (including the local social and cultural contexts that teachers call "the trenches" as opposed to ivory-tower theorizing) just as aestheticism is from the sociocultural contexts of music. By focusing their scholarly efforts in, or deriving guidance from, the scholarship of music theory, ethnomusicology, or historical musicology (or even from the broader field of education), music teacher educators may bring wider appreciation and acknowledgement to scholarly work also being done in the oft-misunderstood field of music education research. Thus, they not only can improve the effectiveness and relevance of their teaching (see, for example, both Palmer and Shepherd this volume) but also can attract wider appreciation of the relevance of music education research. Indeed, done well, music education research should more often be of the quality and kind that other music disciplines could draw from in advancing their theories. A related problem in research is that of allowing fascination with the latest fashionable theory to take precedence over direct confrontation of problems via rigorous studies designed around precise questions that are both *unanswered* and *answerable*. Most would agree that research should clearly address the real problems faced, and questions raised, by practicing music teachers, yet too often this seems to not be the case in our scholarly journals.

If we allow that actions tend to "speak louder than words," it seems reasonable to suggest that no amount of theoretical argumentation regarding cultural diversity and lifelong musicianship is likely to compensate for the reality of music teachers (and teacher educators) who do not deeply experience other musical cultures and sensibilities for themselves, or who do not continue to explore music in all its richness as performers over the course of their own lives. Remarkably, some music education professors and programs actively discourage their graduate students from continuing their own music making on the assumption (stated or tacit) that "it is time for you to focus on research." This situation leads some outstanding musicians to be justifiably uninterested in research written by "people who can't play" and who, therefore, presumably teach from outside appropriate communities of practice and the musicianship that characterizes those practices. Most would agree that research should clearly address the real problems faced by musicians, and that a greater appreciation for the field of music education would develop if the relationship between research-based knowledge and practice were acknowledged by leading musicians.

What I have written here seems to implicate many in our profession whom I genuinely respect and admire. My point here is not to suggest that things have gone terribly wrong in our field, but rather than we should keep striving to do even better and that "action for change" is warranted—for example, following the lead of some

of the innovations and innovators mentioned earlier. It is never too late, for example, to start learning music technology, guitar, or a second language spoken in great numbers by students, or to join a community music ensemble—all of which, of course, would help "ground" a music teacher in local musical contexts. Such activities are even offered in some childcare facilities and retirement homes, which are additional local domains to which music educators should devote greater attention.

My central point here has been that music education is likely to become far more relevant and effective when we: (a) enact progressive educational policies and practices embracing musical innovation that builds on tradition and thus promotes living genres (including acceptance of creative agency via new technologies and musical hybridity); (b) forge communities of practice that directly link institutionalized school music to community music, thereby bridging the gap between it and other aspects of students' musical identities and preferences; and (c) reconceptualize both musicianship and musical meaning as embodied practices within which "situated" understanding—critical awareness of the sociocultural contexts that give rise to a music and the practices through which it flourishes—is acknowledged as an essential component of creativity.

Implications for Policy and Practice

In recent years, music education has increasingly faced challenges associated with corporatization and commercialization, both within our educational institutions and professional organizations. As one reflects on various controversies that have impacted our field, it seems clear that more must be done to ensure integrity is maintained in leadership in the field of music education, so a focus may be successfully sustained on the kinds of points I have suggested in relation to Ideal #2. Music teachers need to be critical thinkers who promote democratic forums in which issues of concern are raised to those in positions of leadership. Such models of critical engagement, in turn, will result in students whose abilities entail a comprehensive and empowering musicianship as the basis for their lifelong musical practices.

The observations and arguments presented in this chapter suggest certain key questions that require careful consideration when faced with a new music education initiative:

1 Does this initiative provide maximum *benefit to students* in terms of *quality musical experiences*?
2 If money is involved, exactly *how will the money be used* and how can this be *verified*?
3 Are there additional conflicting agendas associated with this initiative, besides musical *benefit to students*, that might be cause for concern, (for example, opportunities for executives to attain the favor of politicians or CEOs of major corporations, to profit from stock options, to promote themselves, or to sell additional products, etc.)?

Music teachers and teacher educators owe it to their students, to society, and to the musical cultures in society to ensure that the focus of music education is always maintained on the objective of fostering flexible and creative musicianship within programs that value diverse musical identities attuned to the reality of musical practices outside of schools.

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